San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission
455 Golden Gate Avenue, Suite 10600, San Francisco, California 94102 tel 415 352 3600 fax 415 352 3606

December 9, 2015

TO: Bay Fill Policies Working Group Members

FROM: Lawrence J. Goldzband, Executive Director (415/352-3653; larry.goldzband@bcdc.ca.gov)
Joe LaClair, Chief Planning Officer (415/352-3656; joe.laclair@bcdc.ca.gov)
Brenda Goeden, Sediment Program Manager (415/352-3623; brenda.goeden@bcdc.ca.gov)

SUBJECT: November 19, 2015 Commission Bay Fill Policies Working Group Meeting Summary

1. **Roll Call, Introductions and Approval of Agenda.** Working Group Chair, Barry Nelson called the meeting to order. Working Group members in attendance included Commissioner Jason Brush. Also in attendance: Andy Gunther (BAECC), Jill Singleton (Cargill), Matt Gerhart (SCC), Jeremy Lowe (SFEI), John Bourgeois (South Bay Salt Ponds), and Ben Livesy (SFBRWQCB).

2. **Approval of Working Group Summary from the October 15 meeting (*Postponed*)**

(Public Comment). Ben Livesy of the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board (Water Board) provided a brief update on their Wetland Program Development Grant, which focuses on multi-benefit projects within the shoreline band. Projects include new permitting of wastewater treatment and evaluating regulatory considerations of effluent discharged into the Bay; valuation of shoreline fringe uses; water use requirements; and the evaluation of existing regulatory programs and their roles in multi-benefit projects within the shoreline band. The program is on a two-year schedule and will develop findings and recommendations that will be shared with the regulatory community.

3. **Baylands Ecosystem Habitat Goals Updates.** Matt Gerhart of the State Coastal Conservancy and Jeremy Lowe of the San Francisco Estuary Institute provided an overview of the newly released Baylands Ecosystem Habitat Goals Project (Goals Project). The objective of the overview was to introduce the findings and recommendations of the Goals Project to the workgroup and gain feedback on the presentation in preparation for a full Commission briefing. Presentation and discussion highlights included:

   a. The importance of marshes and transitional zones due to multi-benefits such as habitat creation, recreational uses and mitigation to the effects of climate change and sea level rise.

   b. A Comparison of the findings of the 1999 Goals Update to today's conditions and determining how well the region is doing in addressing the important issues.

c. The acceleration of sea level rise and reduction of sediment in the system is an alarming scenario that is detrimental to wetland restoration efforts. If we can ensure sediment is in adequate supply, we can sustain marsh restoration and development through the century, but without the sediment, the marshes will drown or erode as sea level rises.

   i. If the supply of sediment could be augmented, the marshes could keep up with sea level rise and current tidal marsh restoration and creation projects could successfully reach marsh plain augmentation.

   ii. An important question the region must address is how can we manage sediment better to address this low sediment – high sea level scenario?

d. The Goals Project identified strategies to reduce impacts from sea level rise, which include: restoring complete systems to maximize ecosystem health; placing sediment in the appropriate places to feed marshes and wetlands; and taking advantage of this relatively quiet period before the acceleration of mid-century sea level rise.

e. Regional recommendations include:

   i. Design complexity and connectivity into the baylands landscapes

      - Incorporate more channel complexity by connecting mudflats and upland areas to marshes providing benefits to the habitat mosaic.
      - Restore gentle transition zones behind marshes.
      - Active management of complex marsh connections.
      - Restore baylands to full tidal action prior to 2030 so that marshes have time to mature. This means marshes need to be created sooner rather than later.

   ii. Plan for the migration of baylands and think differently about the dynamic nature of the Bay systems, including the migration of marshes inland due to sea level rise and the need to establish transition zones.

      - The creation of transition zones proposes a regulatory issue because it may often require fill; decreasing the Bay's surface area and volume of water; and habitat conversion. These are potentially in conflict with BCDC's fill policies. However, the Commission has a great deal of flexibility when it comes to fill for marsh restoration and salt ponds.

   iii. Develop and implement a comprehensive regional sediment management plan by understanding how sediment can be used strategically to help offset some of the losses in tidal marshlands due to sea level rise. What are the various sources of sediment we have in the Bay? How can flood channels be redesigned to help sediment move through the system? What role does sand mining activity play in removing sediment from the system?

      - Navigation dredging account for between two and three million cubic yards (cy) per year.

- Flood protection dredging is far more uncertain, but an initial estimate has revealed about 300,000 from local watersheds. This number needs further investigation.
- Sand mining accounts for 1.5 million cy per year.
- Sand mining and dredging are managed differently and are differentiated due to the project purpose of each. Navigation dredging puts sediment back into the system through in-Bay disposal, while aggregate mining does not.
- Understanding the different categories of sediment and the regulatory hurdles to get it where it needs to go.
- Stockpiling of material requires double handling, which raises costs. Because 100% of sediment placed is located where needed, direct placement is preferable.

Next Steps: The workgroup will need to develop the appropriate questions to touch on in the course designing the presentation of the Goals Project and its outcomes to the full Commission. Next steps should include identifying the obstacles the Commission may face, such as minimum fill and the differences between fill in the Commission's Bay jurisdiction and fill in the Commission's salt pond jurisdiction.